

342 In the center is the living room, and is used for the reception of guests and as the dining room. One of the two smaller rooms on either side of the living room is occupied by the chief of the family and his wife; the room opposite is occupied by the eldest son.

352 The largest part of each dwelling room is occupied by the *k'ang*—a small platform, two or three feet high,

• 354 built with bricks, upon which the whole family sleeps, sits, talks, sews, etc. In front of the platform there is a small oven, the smoke from which passes through brick channels under the platform before reaching the chimney so that the platform is always warm. In winter the *k'ang* is a wonderful invention. On it are spread felt rugs, and along the wall are folded and piled the covers and skins used at night. Three or four wooden cases along the wall contain the clothes of members of the family and the treasures of the mother (needle box, sewing materials, etc.), and there is also a small cupboard. Along

353 the wall, hung on pegs, are a gun, a stringed musical instrument, clothes, etc. In the corner of the room stands a jar containing fermenting pickled vegetables.

342 Part of the smoke of the oven escapes through a hole pierced in the window and the door is opened when the smoke is too heavy. Beams and rafters are like ebony, blackened by the oily smoke. Around New Year, the walls are whitewashed and two or three pictures of deities are placed on the walls. After a few days the whitewash turns brown and the walls are muddy again.

343 In the northeast corner of the courtyard is the kitchen and in this building the youngest of the married sons lives with his family—for in this blessed corner, according to the shaman, a large progeny is to be expected.² The two remaining corners are converted into stables—for these corners, again according to the shaman, are propitious for the reproduction of animals. Sheep and cows are fenced outside the courtyard.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGE

621 Since nobles and commoners live in the same kind of
184 house and earn their living by the same means, their substance and wealth are not sharply differentiated. Poor and rich, nobles and commoners, live in the same hamlets, help each other and go in and out of each

² This custom preserves the tradition that the youngest son is "guardian of the hearth." There are many evidences that in ancient Turco-Mongol society elder sons moved away at marriage and received at that time their share of the inheritance. The youngest son remained with the parents and received the residual inheritance. Hence, according to Vladimirtsov (*Régime social des Mongols*, 60), the term *otchin* or *otigin*, "prince of the fire," for the youngest son. P. Pelliot and L. Hambis (*Histoire des campagnes de Gengis Khan* 1: 176, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1951) point out that *ot* is Turkish for "fire," while *chin* is the medieval Mongol form of *tigin* (*tigin*), which though occurring in Turkish, is in their opinion of Avar (old Mongol) origin. They point to another word for "youngest son," *otqan*, as "probably" deriving from *ot-qan* (khan), "sovereign of the fire."—O. L.

/64 cont'd/

585 envelops the chopsticks. Then the son-in-law places himself on the left side of the bride, near enough to her so that his arm touches hers, and so that she knows when she must go ahead and stop. At the moment when they enter the courtyard, pieces of red felt are spread in their path one after the other. Cash, symbol of wealth, are thrown in front of them, and likewise wheat, symbol of fecundity. The couple is led straight to the kitchen where the T'ou-jen honor the god of the hearth. There the jug and the chopsticks which she held are taken from the bride, and these objects are put down before the god of the hearth, whom the bride salutes with three prostrations. (1)

1. "Zum Feuerkultus bei den Mongolen /On Fire Worship among the Mongols/," by N. Poppe, Asia Major, Vol. II, Part I, pp. 141-142.

[576
782] As can be seen from the above, much depends on the fire god. It is no wonder, then, that the young bride, when she first steps across the threshold of the new house, must bow in front of the hearth. By this act she puts herself under the protection of the fire god, since this same figure is the guardian spirit of the family. /Cited in German. /

/65/ We have seen that at the bride's departure chopsticks were thrown on her mother's lap. This gesture meant that she no longer belonged to the clan; here, as soon as she arrives, she is incorporated into the bridegroom's family by being offered another pair of chopsticks and presenting them to the god of the hearth. From the kitchen she is led to the nuptial chamber, her head still veiled. On the four corners of the k'ang (1) have been put several cash, two

1. K'ang: stove used in the north, on which the family spends the night.

packages of sugar, and some red lozenges.

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Four bundles of straw burn at the four corners of the courtyard; it is hoped that the smoke will rise straight up. An oil lamp, in which two wicks of equal length have been placed, is put in front of the religious image in the main building and is lighted as soon as the bride has entered the nuptial chamber. They look at the lamp attentively without touching it in order to see which of the two wicks, the one on the right side or the one on the left, will go out first. In this is seen an omen for the long life of the husband and wife; the right wick designates the girl, the left the boy.

The bride's maid of honor accepted the cup of gin presented to her when she dismounted. She dipped her finger in it and sprinkled some toward the four cardinal directions; then she touched the wine with her lips. She did the same for the bread and tea which were presented. Only after performing this rite did she follow the bride into the nuptial chamber, whose door was closed behind her. She is not given anything to eat or drink as long as the marriage rite is not finished.

[263]

As soon as the bride crossed the threshold of the door and entered the courtyard, the go-between took his place in the middle of it, holding in his hands a cup of flour made from parched wheat; he ate some flour and drank some gin each time the bride passed through the courtyard, either going to the kitchen or returning to the nuptial chamber.

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The other guests do not enter then but go toward the open area in front of the house. A little table has been placed /66/ in the middle of the area, and on it are seen a well-done sheep, several more legs of mutton, a pig's head, some sausages.... In front of the table is spread out a piece of red felt on which is seated the bridegroom's maternal uncle. Here he seems to fill the post of head of the family as did the maternal uncle of the bride in his niece's family. Gin is being warmed over a small fire.

Upon the arrival of the guests the bridegroom's father has gone to meet them with the traditional k'ata on both hands. He greets each of them by putting the k'ata on their hands. This is the ceremony of welcome.

[38 cont.]

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Prayer service: Now he begins his prayer service. Before each prayer service a few tormas are made; if he is a great lama, his assistants see to it. The tormas vary and represent offerings to the gods. In part they are left standing on the table, or they are taken to the household altar. Before that comes a series of little water bowls, grain bowls, liquor bowls (3),

3. [Foreign text p. 41.] There is a definite number and order for these little bowls. The water offering plays an important role in the monastic cult, cf. Kumbum, p. 251. The Tujen and Chia-Hsifan [Sifan] frequently present the water offering in the morning. Thus,

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Fig. 4.



Fig. 5

Fig. 4. Two hourglass drums. (Drawing of a Tujen.) Fig. 5. Butter-lamp.

I once saw how an old man got up in the morning, washed himself, burned incense, put a large copper bowl and 12 little bowls of water on the household altar, kowtowed three times in the courtyard, one of these in the direction of Kumbum, kowtowed three times in front of the household altar, and then emptied the water bowls.

and butter-lamps, which are always kept burning. Later these tormas are either taken away or eaten by the family, and sometimes thrown

[39 cont.]

792 [Note on foreign text p. 42 cont.]
796 the subsequent prayer ceremonies, the
465 master of gifts, who had sacrificed
[262] this sheep, had the flesh cooked and
[782] a piece served to each of the monks in
the temple during a pause in the prayer.
It is therefore not surprising that the
lama receives a loin of mutton for his
fee. Since the Tujen, however, do
not sacrifice a sheep in the presence
of a lama (cf. the chapter, "The
Mani-tree"), it seems to be a matter
of not performing the killing itself be-
fore the eyes of the lama or in the
same yard.

people give much more, for instance, beautiful horses, orna-
mental pendants, cloth, etc. When it is a matter of great
[782] occasions, a prayer service is even ordered for the monastery
during the time that the lama stays with the master of gifts.
During these days the master of gifts provides all the monks
with rice, sugar, butter, and tea. Even pilgrims who stay in
[788] the monastery during these days and "stop in" to honor and to
pray for the master of gifts are provided for and also receive
alms for the journey.

782 The masters of gifts also usually donate the prayer tea
[272] for the entire monastery, which is drunk during the ceremonial
in the prayer hall, for example, at funerals, etc. Often they
also set up a great number of butter-lamps in the temple at this
● 354 time, or at least they donate the butter for the lamps. [Fig.
6 appears here.]

792 Return: After the lama has received his gifts, he is cere-
796 monially-escorted out of the gate of the yard. An incense
574 offering is again presented, but otherwise no further ceremonies
take place. The white horse is brought up, a kang table with
a felt mat is set up for mounting, and the lama is lifted into
the saddle. Then the men escort him out of the village. There

[626 cont.]

1. [Foreign text p. 628.]

The lamps are large copper butter-lamps or the small copper bowls. -- If there is no mani-tree, the red lamp is hung on a roof slat in front of the door of the main house. This lamp is very likely copied from the Chinese celestial lantern. The Chinese, too, draw up such a lamp on a tall mast in the yard, like a flag, and let it burn every night. It is called t'ien-teng, that is, celestial lamp.

[356] the window newly plastered. In recent times the Tujen also
[177] write vernal sayings on red paper, like the Chinese, and paste them to the door posts. This was formerly not the case.

[573] Night watch: During the night before New Year's Day sleeping is not allowed. The old people say: "Please do not sleep tonight, the gods want to be welcomed early tomorrow morning." Therefore the master of the household stays up with his whole family. They partake liberally of tea, liquor, and the New Year's food, sing and converse until dawn.

527 New Year's morning: At the first cockcrow after midnight
782 even the last stragglers put on their best clothes. Only the very
[888] old in the family remain lying on the kang. The master of the household puts large, burning butter- or oil-lamps in the room on the household altar. In the yard he hangs a red paper lantern with a butter-lamp to the mani-tree (1) [see Note 1 above]. It is attached to a transverse strip on it. Then outside, with the entire family, he gives the great incense offering, and everyone makes a threefold kowtow to the sky out in the open. The same is repeated before the household altar for the countless other spirits. During this time a stone is made red-hot in the
[783] hearth fire, and with this glowing stone all the rooms of the compound are fumigated. At the same time the conch is blown. The fumigation may also be done by women (2).

2. [Foreign text p. 628.] The

[638 cont.]

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[Note on foreign text p. 653 cont.]
the Chinese. Among the Chinese I learned the following: If someone died on an unlucky day -- which the geomancer determines -- there is danger that he will take someone else from the family with him into the beyond. In order to prevent this, the family provides a substitute at the interment. They lay a human figure made of apricot or peach wood, which the demons particularly fear, in a miniature coffin. At the interment this miniature coffin is buried at the base of the grave and the actual coffin is put on top of it. -- The Tujen bury the miniature coffin under the bone-chest. The Chinese name for this custom is ch'ung-sang, that is, double interment. One would do better to translate it as "accompanying interment." It clearly has nothing to do with an escort for the dead and the double interment in the usual sense. A kind of after-consumer [Nachzehrer] is involved here.

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Gifts for the dead: The Tujen make an offering of 12 loaves of bread and a water-lamp before the dead (10). First,

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• [354]

10. [Foreign text p. 654.] Death-gifts and offering regulations correspond with those of the Chinese. The water-lamp, shui-teng, is an earthen bowl which is half-filled with water, beans are usually also added. A layer of oil is poured on the water. A little wooden plate, into which a wick is stuck, floats

[638 cont.]

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• [354]

[171]

[Note on foreign text p. 654 cont.]

on the oil. This is to prevent the wick from burning too far down into the bowl; in order to save oil, the lower half is filled with water. --

The Chinese dough-lamp of long life, ch'ang-ming teng, has nothing to do with this lamp; it is unknown to the Tujen.

the deceased's own family must present these gifts. A so-called paper-bowl also stands on the floor next to the bread and the water-lamp. After each meal some tea, soup, or milk is poured into it, and little pieces of meat, bread, vegetable, etc. are thrown in, according to what the family has just eaten.

[264]

Until the day of cremation the dead is always supposed to partake of the meals of the household. The paper-bowl is an ordinary earthen bowl; it gets its name from the fact that after the paper-burning the charred leaves are thrown in it (11). Along with the

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11. [Foreign text p. 654.] The paper-burning is typically Chinese.

water-lamp it is emptied in front of the gate on the last day, when the death-box leaves the compound for cremation. It is not broken, but may be used again for other purposes.

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On the third day after the death, the oldest married daughter of the household appears with 12 loaves of bread. Then the family loaves before the death-box are replaced by the daughter's loaves. This is called "bread exchange." This takes place each time a person makes an offering of loaves. The oldest daughter is followed in order by the younger ones, whether or not the corpse has already been put in the box. Unmarried daughters of the household do not make offerings. Every time someone offers loaves, he also burns white paper and weeps aloud; the men, it is true, do not weep (24).

[589]

[152]

192 [649 cont.]

764 Death box: odõh.

Bone-chest: mula odõh = little death-box.

• [354] Water-lamp: fdzē dzūla.

Paper-bowl: tsialdzē pendzē.

To wear the clothing reversed: diela furula mōsē.

Prayer tea: rgē tsia.

[782] Prayer for the dead: xar(i)dzān kunē xuenuo mani sguorluo = (to pray) in behalf of the deceased person afterwards the mani in the circle.

Prayer fee for the lama: mbō (Tib. loanword).

Prayer alms: odõh dzied = death-box alms.

192 Own family: dzienāni kudē.

601 Relatives on the father's side: dzienani sāni = own relatives, those with the same family name.

Relatives on the mother's side, affinity through marriage: uroḡ.
Those with different family names.

[608] Artificial kinship: sāni funi = kinship-smoke. Neighbors and friends who take the place of relatives in performing services at the reception of guests, cremation, etc.

[650]

[764] Bone-master, mother's brother: tsigān yesēni daxu = the owner of the white bones;
ku-chu (Chin.).

Mother's brother: nēḡā; achiū (Chin.).

Nephew (sister's son): dzie; wai-sheng (Chin.).

Son-in-law: kurgien; nū-hsū (Chin.).

Sister: agū.

Daughter: fsdzūn.

192 He died as a rider: tsūrog morina bagaldilā sdzia fugudzia.

764 He died as a settler: sānrēdzi liela guei wōldzia.

Burned bones: xuodzēn yāsē = dry bones.

Crematory: taw (tab) (Tib.).

Lighting pole: xuāmbar.

Lay bonze: lao shih-fu (Chin.) = old master.

Demand for an accounting: bāda; pai-ta (Chin.).

769 Grave festival: ch'ing-ming (Chin.); sēn-miñ (21) [see Note 21 above].

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the colossal amounts of butter that a monastery requires. In the temples of Erh-ku-lung eight butter lamps burn before the statues day and night. Each lamp consumes 180 pounds of butter every year, making 1,440 pounds for the eight lamps. The intendant told me that every year he had to provide a total of more than 3,000 pounds of butter for lamps, kitchen, and tea, and had to send lamas to Kukuror and Mongolia in order to collect this enormous amount. The intendant, in short, is the biggest cog in the wheel of administration. A visitor must inquire for him and pay him a visit, for it is he who cares for visitors and pilgrims of note.

It is easy to understand why it pays to have an experienced intendant, one who creates good relations with the outside Chinese world, acquires benefactors for the monastery, maintains control of the inside world of the monastery and has sufficient influence to be successful in the office, but these things cannot be realized in a few months.

The choice of an intendant who is capable is usually easy, but it is not so easy to find a lama who is, at the same time, capable and always loyal and dependable. Because so much power is vested in him it is not exceptional to encounter an intendant who is getting too big for his britches, stirring up trouble and acting as if none of the rules of the monastery existed for him. He disposes of so much wealth that it is almost impossible to control his financial transactions, and many intendants pile up their own comfortable fortune. They know all the liabilities and the debts of the monastery; they enjoy too much personal influence in Chinese administrative circles, and when things go wrong they can pull many wires in order to save themselves or even to harm the monastery. It is not easy to handle intendants, and it is more difficult to dismiss them, according to the sayings of experienced old lamas.

Next to the intendant comes the procurator (nirwa, in Tibetan; Takuan-chia, in Chinese). He also is appointed by the supreme chief of the monastery, in consultation with the intendant. The appointment is for three or five years, and may be renewed. The procurator supplies the personal needs of the Living Buddha, and under the supervision of the intendant he administers the internal affairs of the intendency, including the board and jobs of servants, upkeep of buildings, stables, and equipment. He organizes the expeditions that go out to collect alms in Mongolia and Kukuror, keeps the accounts of the collection of revenues and of the corvées imposed on monastery subjects, and judges minor lawsuits. He discusses with the intendant the small loans granted to subjects or other people, dispenses the alms distributed to lamas. He is in fact the lieutenant and usually the protégé of the intendant, through whom he has obtained his appointment from the Living Buddha. If an intendant and his procurator are in collusion, they can easily dupe the supreme chief for a long time.

time with the beating of drums and cymbals perform their wildest dances for a long time. Usually three or four among them seem to be possessed. All of a sudden the chief of the shamans becomes excited to fever pitch, and howls "go to the goddess." Then, followed by the other shamans, he grasps a chicken and, dancing with fury, bites its neck and jerks off its head in a wild movement. Grimacing with distorted face, and glittering eyes, he throws the bleeding chicken head in the supposed direction of the goddess, uttering dreary cries and indistinct sounds. After the rite is accomplished, the people go home for dinner. It is indeed a savage means of greeting "a goddess of joy," with a bleeding head and with such wild appearance. 796 756

The split-personality of the "good" shaman who the first day was so gentle, so kind, so considerate for the spirits, shows up more and more; he has to see blood and to offer bloody sacrifices.

LEAVE-TAKING OF THE SPIRITS

After sunset all the villagers come to the temple. In some villages the women are not allowed to attend the evening rites, but elders asserted that in former times the women were admitted everywhere. [52]

A hundred small lamps are prepared, the cup made with dough and the wick with twisted cotton wool. Into the cup is poured vegetable oil. The lamps are displayed in rows on the offering table in front of the pole and the statues. The shamans first perform the usual dance, keeping time to the beating of the drums. The leave taking of the guest spirits is called the "opening of the highway" (*k'ai ma-lu*). A bridge* is to be built over which the guests are supposed to pass. A big roll is put on each of the four corners of the table, and a larger one in the middle; a paper banner is placed on each of the five rolls. A lamp is lit near the banners and a plate put near each of them; on the middle plate is placed the head of a chicken. [354]

The chief of the shamans asks the shamans and the apprentices for the meaning of the five rolls. The five rolls mean the five mountains; the five lamps, the five lakes; the five wicks, the five dragons; the banners, the incense which billows up into the sky. Why is the head of a chicken put on the middle plate? In order to steady the *Yin-Yang* (male and female principle of the Taoists). The chief shaman writes, around the roll in the center, the eight Chinese cyclical characters and asks for the explanation of each of them. If one of the shamans or apprentices is unable to answer he is scolded and upbraided in front of the whole gathering.

A bridge is constructed for the spirits from one end of the table to the other by disposing two rows of rolls in which are planted brand new chopsticks; on both sides of the bridge are planted incense sticks in smaller rolls. The shaman asks again for explanations: Is there still another way existing above that bridge or not? An- [42]

* Eliade, *op. cit.*, 419.

If, however, black and white rites do not work, the Monguors call for the Taoist priest, who paints all the items used (the wood, etc.), with a coat of goat blood. He binds the logs in a bundle by means of goat guts, and sprinkles goat blood upon the burning fire. The rite is called the "red Wei-sang."

These facts give evidence of the importance attached by the Monguors to the fire for purifying from uncleanness and preventing harm caused by evil spirits. They show their devotion for the fire by having a big cypress fire kindled during the performance of religious rites and the most important moments of life, as at marriages or the celebration of the sixtieth birthday. However, fire does not only play an important role in the life of the Monguors in the open air; its role is as important in the private life of the families where it is worshipped under the form of the "fire of the hearth," the "hearth god."

THE HEARTH FIRE

Among the Monguors, the Chinese, and the Tibetans, the cult of the hearth god belongs entirely to the department of the women. Everywhere, the temple of the hearth god is the kitchen.

No wonder that the hearth god is supposed to be interested in a special way in the fecundity of the wives and the protection of the children, and that it is honored at fixed times by its own ritual.

FIRE AND FECUNDITY

When the Monguor bride arrives at the home of the bridegroom, she does not prostrate herself before her parents-in-law or before the guests, but is led straight to the kitchen. Here she worships the god of the hearth giving three prostrations, burning incense, offering a bottle of wine and her chopsticks, which she has brought with her.

It was noted in the first volume of this study that the youngest couple in the family always lives in the kitchen, where the god of the hearth is honored, because the Monguors say that in that way fecundity is assured. Women who have plenty of children and do not wish to have more will leave the kitchen and live in another room. It has been noted that, among the Mongols, the youngest son inherits his father's hearth, occupies his tent, and is called the prince of the fire.

When poor people cannot afford the luxury of a lavish marriage, nor invite guests, they marry the young couple in the kitchen "before the god of the hearth." The makeup of the new bride is done before the god of the hearth and not in the living room."

An unusual practice relates to the fecundity assumed to be bestowed on women by means of the cult of the spirit of the fire (and of the god of the hearth). On the fifteenth of the first moon, at night, on the edge of the big threshing floor of the village, a number of small heaps of cypress boughs are kindled. While musicians

¹⁹ L. Schram, *Le Mariage chez les Tou-ien du Kansu*, 39.

beat drums and play mandolins, all the younger wives and their husbands pursue each other, jumping over the fire heaps, merrymaking. No wives or husbands would miss this practice, for the tradition goes that it provides fecundity. However, the Yassa forbids jumping over the fire.²⁰ 842
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Professor N. Poppe notes that among the Mongols the spirit of the fire is represented riding a he-goat, and that the he-goat is a symbol of fecundity, as Plano Carpini already noted.²¹ This note of Professor Poppe evidences the existence of the fact that a relation existed between the fire god and fecundity in olden times. The Monguors seem not to know the existence of the god of the fire riding the he-goat, although they know that the hearth god secures fecundity. The hearth god also procures fecundity among the Buriats.²²

FIRE AS THE PROTECTOR OF THE CHILDREN

The god of the hearth not only provides fecundity to the daughters-in-law, but it protects their children. On the second of the second moon is performed the rite of consecration of the children to the god of the hearth. In the very early morning, before boiling water for washing and making tea, the mother roasts some handfuls of spelt in the cauldron and after them some handfuls of peas. Husband and wife spread them devoutly in the courtyard in front of the door. Then the elders clip some hair from the foreheads of the children under thirteen years of age, and cut the nails on their fingers. Hair and nail parings are carefully put in a cup and covered with a red cloth. The cup is placed before the picture of the hearth god and a copper coin placed on top of it. All members of the family prostrate themselves nine times, holding incense sticks in their joined hands, and the incense sticks are then fixed before the picture of the hearth god. On the twenty-fourth of the twelfth moon, at the time the god starts its journey to Heaven, the contents of the cup are burned in the hearth, together with the picture of the god. The Monguors explain this as the yearly rite of consecration of the children to the hearth god. 952
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CULT OF THE HEARTH GOD

Rite at the End of the Year

The most important rites in honor of the spirit of the hearth are performed at its departure for Heaven, and at its coming back from Heaven, for so important a benefactor must receive the highest honors possible, and the most affectionate greetings. This is true all over China. Men do not attend these rites. 795
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The spirit of the hearth of the Chinese starts its journey to heaven on the twenty-third of the last moon of the year, on horseback or on a mule. The spirit of

²⁰ Schmidt, *op. cit.* 10: 73.

²¹ Poppe, *op. cit.* 2: 135. See also n. 15, above, for Agni, the Hindu god, riding a ram.

²² *Ibid.*, 301.

the Monguors starts its journey in the same way on the twenty-fourth of the same moon. Before that day, all daughters-in-law on holiday at their mothers' have to be back, for the cult of the spirit is entrusted to the women. This rule is kept most rigidly. 795
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At evening, after supper, the women don their makeup and put on their best dresses, while the children are clad in their New Year's dresses. Grandmother and the daughters-in-law and the children kneel before the image of the spirit, holding incense sticks in their joined hands. The grandmother presents and puts in front of the spirit a boiled chicken and twelve rolls of steamed bread, and kindles the oil lamp. Prostrations are made and paper is burned in the oven. Then the participants, sitting on the floor chatting, recall the events of the whole year. When the lamp is nearly burned out, the offerings are removed. Some straw is spread in the oven, on which the picture of the spirit is placed. Twelve small bundles of hay, some peas (horses are fed with peas in the country), and three or four rolls are placed on the image, as well as the cup containing hair and nail parings of the children. The straw is kindled. The participants prostrate themselves and bow. The grandmother says: "Good deity, you know all that has happened in the family during the year; you know our deficiencies and shortcomings. Please do not tell about them when you arrive in Heaven, but rather, speak about our pitiable living conditions, our miseries, our afflictions, our poor cattle. Please come back soon. Do not linger in Heaven for too long a time, as we need you very much; we will wait for you on the thirtieth at midnight. Bring with you children for my daughters-in-law—boys are preferable to girls. Bring health for all of us; bring riches and wealth, and blessings for the cattle." If some member of the family becomes ill at that time, or if one of the daughters-in-law is childless, all these facts are entrusted to the spirit and put on its knees with confidence. The fire in the oven is extinguished, and the good spirit is on the way, enjoying his ride to Heaven.

This is one of the most intimate prayers the Monguors say in a group in the family. The same rite is performed among the Chinese in the same affectionate way and almost in the same terms, and it may be that the Monguors borrowed it from them.

The spirit of the hearth seems to be the envoy of Heaven, whose duty appears to be the supervision of the doings of the families. It seems to be very potent, for it is able to obtain in Heaven all kinds of blessings in behalf of its protégés.

The next day the wall is whitewashed and the kitchen is cleansed. On the thirtieth, at evening, a new image is pasted on the wall, in front of which is placed a chicken, four rolls, a lamp and incense sticks. At midnight, after the fire is worshipped in the courtyard, Heaven and all the spirits are honored on the roof, and the guardian deity in the living room. The family pros-

trates itself before the spirit of the hearth, congratulates it, and is happy, for the spirit is supposed to have come back at that very moment with a load of blessings. In the early morning the elders will honor it also.

Several times I asked the Monguors whom the spirit of the hearth was going to see in Heaven. The answer was always: "Our women claim, as do the Chinese, that the hearth god is going to see 'Old Father Heaven.' It is true that the spirits are everywhere, and the women know it; but on that night they say the same thing that the Chinese say."

Rites During the Year

Every time women prepare food, the first bowl is always offered devoutly to the hearth god.

On the fifth of the fifth moon, steamed rolls, shaped like flowers, are offered to the spirit of the hearth, and willow boughs adorn its image. Nobody could explain the connection between the willow and the spirit of the hearth. (Is it a Chinese custom?)

It has been noted above that steamed rolls, prepared with the flour of the ~~spell~~ of the new harvest, and a lamp kindled with the new oil of the year, are offered to the spirit of the hearth. On the fifteenth of the eighth moon, rolls and a chicken are offered to the spirit of the hearth. On the eighth of the last moon of the year, a piece of ice is put before it. (Is this a Chinese custom?)

If a member of the family has been smitten with a severe disease, old people claim that the spirit of the hearth is angry and taking in ill grace the uncleanness of the women for having let milk drip in the fire, or for having poured water on it and on the ashes, or for poking the fire with an iron rod. In that event, rolls, wine, and chicken are offered and prostrations are made. Sometimes a sheep is offered, and a lama is invited to pray in propitiation before the image of the spirit of the hearth.

When eyes are sore, or when there is trouble with scalp and hair, the spirit of the hearth has to play physician. Before the image, a red-hot stone is put in a pot of water in which aromatic leaves of wild mint are boiled. The sick man, after prostrating himself, bows over the pot and is steamed by the vapors and healed. The same rite is used to purify the sacred animal at New Year's.

It is noteworthy that the shaman is never invited by the Monguors to honor the fire or the spirit of the hearth, although once in a while a lama is invited to perform a propitiating rite. That department, like that of the sacred animal, seems to be foreign to them.

IMAGE OF THE HEARTH GOD

The old Monguors are accustomed to paste on the wall a sheet of white paper. In the middle of the paper is pasted vertically a short but wide yellow paper ribbon, under which is pasted, horizontally, a large red-fringed paper ribbon, said to be the skirt of the spirit.

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On both sides of the red skirt are pasted two small yellow ribbons, said to represent the handkerchiefs of the spirit. On the upper part of the sheet of paper is pasted, horizontally, a large red, fringed strip of paper.

The skirt and the handkerchiefs are items belonging to women's dress, and consequently the spirit is supposed to be a female spirit. Some Monguors, when the whole primitive representation is finished, write on the yellow ribbon in the center: "Lord of the Hearth." Many Monguors no longer use this old representation of the spirit of the hearth, but instead, they buy a Chinese picture. After a few years it will be hard to find out to which sex their hearth god belonged.

According to the interesting study of Professor N. Poppe, based only on old fire prayers and hymns, the god of the fire among the Mongols is a female god, called "mother of the hearth," "mother of the fire," etc., but also "king of the fire," and even "mother king of the fire." The god of the fire possesses a big family consisting of seven girls and five boys and many servants. It is not clear why prayers and hymns are sung once for the king of the fire, and once for the lady.²³

Among the Mongols, as among the Monguors, the most important act of honoring the god of the hearth takes place on the last days of the year. In the hymns, all kind of blessings are implored from the god of the hearth, who seems omnipotent.²⁴

The Tibetans, from the oldest times on, also had their "god of the hearth" and their "queen hearth god." Both were very touchy concerning the smallest impurities thrown into the fire; a trifle could upset them.²⁵

Among the Tungus, the spirit of the fire is an old woman, who stays in the fire of the family; fire is to be revered.²⁶

It is interesting to record that, among the Chinese also, the sex of the god of the hearth is not definitely fixed. Father Doré, studying twenty-nine sources related to the subject, notes that eight describe it as female, while a few assert that the spirit is not a single person, but a real couple, husband and wife. The remainder claim the masculine sex for their spirit.²⁷

In old China.

Chieh was the spirit of the hearth, wearing red clothes and having the appearance of a beautiful woman. [*Chieh* means chignon.] It is strange that the spirit of the hearth has a female appearance. Confucius is reported to have said that the cult of the hearth is a cult of old ladies. There is a difference between the spirits of the hearth and of the fire: the last one is a male spirit, and the first a female, which is assimilated with the first woman cook.²⁸

²³ N. Poppe, *Zum Feuer Kultus bei den Mongolen*, *Asia Major* 2: 133, 1925.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 140.

²⁵ Hoffman, *op. cit.*, 169.

²⁶ Shirokogoroff, *op. cit.*, 128.

²⁷ H. Doré, *Recherches sur les superstitions en Chine*, Part 2, 2: 901, Shanghai, Sikawei. See also Li-ki, *Couvreur*, 1: 554. Ho Kien fu, 1899, Mission Catholique.

²⁸ M. Granet, *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne*, 308, Paris, Alcan, 1926.

The bewilderment concerning the sex of the god of the hearth and its social position is astonishing. Some times the god seems to be a married couple, sometimes a single female, or a single male. The traditional picture made by the Monguor women themselves offers a definite solution concerning the sex of "their" hearth god. The traditions concerning the fecundity attached to it seem connected with the Mongol king of the fire riding a he-goat, notwithstanding that the Monguors are unable to give any reason for this connection, and do not know anything about the existence of this he-goat rider. Maybe the solution of the puzzle is to be sought in the suggestion of Granet, that two spirits are involved, the spirit of the fire which is a male, and the god of the hearth which is a female.

OFFERING TO HEAVEN AND ALL THE SPIRITS

THE FAMILY OFFERING AFTER THE HARVEST

After the spelt is cut, some sheaves are immediately carried home and threshed. The grain is ground on the stone, which is cleansed carefully. The women steam thirteen rolls of bread made with the newly ground flour. All members of the family climb on top of the roof in their best dresses and kneel, holding incense sticks in their joined hands. The chief of the family lifts up to Heaven the salver with the thirteen steaming rolls and shouts three times, at the top of his voice, the usual "*Mitchioo*," and "Heaven and all the spirits." The whole family prostrates itself thankfully for the new harvest. Crumbs of bread are thrown to the four points of the compass. The Monguors say that the crumbs must be thrown in this way in order to feed the roaming, hungry, malignant spirits of the deceased, who always are on the prowl to harm the people.

The family comes down and offers the same rolls to the guardian spirit of the family, and to the spirit of the hearth, and then the whole family eats the rolls steamed with the new flour of the year.

In autumn, when linseed and colza seed are cut and the new oil is pressed, the same rite is performed with the new oil. A lamp with the new oil is kindled on the roof of the house with the usual prostrations and shoutings, another is kindled for the guardian spirit of the family, and another for the spirit of the hearth. The Tibetans in the country perform the same rite and the Chinese do also, but the Chinese thank only the "Old Father Heaven" and not "Heaven and all the spirits."

THE OFFERING OF THE SHEEP

It has been noted above that whenever a sheep is offered to a deity in the family, first of all a piece of the skin of the forehead is cut and thrown in the court yard for "Heaven" separately, with shouts of "Heaven" and no more; that a second piece is cut and thrown in the same way, with a shout of "all the spirits," and that

/The Monguors/

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sider the Mongours as offshoot of the Mongols; others believe they are of Sha-t'o Turkish stock, and that they came to the Hsi-ning region during the T'ang Dynasty (618-906), but that they were not subjugated by the Chinese until the Ming Dynasty.

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The Chinese refer to the Mongours as T'u-jen, or natives, meaning the people born in a certain place, or the original inhabitants of that place. After the Mongours submitted to the rule of the Ming Dynasty, their chiefs, according to Chinese historical record, became Chinese officials with the title of T'u-ssu. At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the fields around the towns in Kansu were irrigated by canals assigned to Chinese military colonists, and the grasslands in the valleys were assigned to the various T'u-ssu for the pasturing of their herds and the cultivation of grains without irrigation. As the Mongours were relegated to the side valleys, they were forced to abandon the more fertile irrigated fields, and for that reason part of them fell back on the pastoral economy which they had not yet entirely abandoned. The present day Mongours may be pastoral or agricultural, depending upon where they are located.

2. Patterns of living

a. Dwelling

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The people were originally nomads who lived in circular felt tents like those of the Mongols. After they settled in Kansu, they lived in houses of the Chinese pattern, built by frontier Chinese.

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The house is surrounded by walls, forming a square, facing south, with a small gate at the southwest corner. The house has mud walls, thatched roof, wooden rafters and beams. Stables and kitchen, separate from the dwelling quarters, are scattered at the other three corners. Mangers for the cattle are outside the buildings, under the windows. There are rooms along the side wall where the younger sons of the family dwell, or where grain, wood, saddles and farm implements are stored. The Mongours like the reassuring nearness of their animals, and at night the courtyard is crowded with noisy animals such as mules, donkeys and horses.

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The head of the family and his wife live in the northern building against the back wall of the enclosure. In the center of the house is a room used for the reception of guests and for the family dining room. The chief and his wife have one or two small rooms beside the living room, and the eldest son occupies the opposite room. In each room there is a brick k'ang, a sort of fireplace with its opening on the outside. The k'ang takes up most of the room, and there is little furniture except some wooden chests where clothing and food are stored.

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The youngest married son and his family live in the northwest corner of the courtyard near the kitchen. This is considered the "blessed corner," where many offspring may be expected. Tra-